

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF A LEARNING ORGANIZATION: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFORMAL LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Changes in innovation and technology, globalization processes, increasing competition determine changes in the activities of learning organizations (educational institutions). Effective management helps manage these changes and meet emerging challenges. The concept of learning organizations is closely related to future perspectives, perceptions of an institution that is constantly evolving and changing. Those changes affect not only the institution itself but also its employees who need to change, improve, and meet the challenges that arise with it. In order to overcome such changes, not only the purposeful lifelong learning is important, but also the self-directed learning. In both cases, this can only be achieved with innovative and focused leadership that facilitates a variety of forms of employee learning. The essence of effective management in learning organizations is related to the goals pursued jointly both by the organization itself and its employees because otherwise it will be difficult to improve and change. With this in mind, the aim of the article is to identify effective management solutions that help to improve the self-learning of employees in this case the teachers. To achieve the

goal, the tasks are formulated to discuss the concepts of effective management and learning organization, to describe the theoretical aspects of self-learning; to reveal the self-learning strategies of the learning organization which is the school. Thus, the research highlighted the opportunities provided by the effective management of learning organizations, reflected in self-learning, for the development of employees so that their skills and knowledge are constantly updated. Emphasized self-learning strategies - practical work, observation, communication and collaboration, reflection, reading - are preliminary guidelines for creating a suitable learning environment within the organization.

Keywords: *Effective management; Learning organization; Informal learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovation in various sectors of activity encourages managers and employees to constantly learn and acquire new knowledge and skills. Growing competition between organizations motivates their managers to rethink the performance of organizations and pay more attention to employee learning (Merkys et al., 2014). Breakthroughs in new technologies highlight the growing need for educated skilled, competent workers.

The quality of services and the successful operation of the organization also depend on the available qualifications, knowledge and competence of the employees. In order to remain in demand, organizations, including educational organizations, must constantly improve, learn, become qualitatively new in other words become learning organizations. Modern effective management is looking to the future, thinking about the future, how to turn from a traditional, today's organization into a constantly learning, developing, changing organization.

Effective management translates into a practiced investment in the skills of employees that are needed in their current operations but looking to the future in employee development is also a feature of a learning organization. What is important is the management's approach to employees' self-learning strategies and the results that this learning brings to the organization. And this approach must be integral, defining a formula for impeccable performance that combines theories of effective management and learning.

Today's researchers pay a lot of attention to the research of learning organizations. The development of the concept of a learning organization and the possibilities for the development of these organizations are analysed (Carry et al., 2020; Örténblad, 2018; Pan et al., 2020), various theories and perspectives are considered (Sidani et al., 2020; Reese, 2020), the

possibilities of involving employees in the activities of learning organizations are considered (Malik et al., 2017). The latter factor is closely related to the attempt to find a connection between emotional state and effective management (Berkovich et al., 2020), as the communication factor is crucial in finding common goals for the organization and its employees (Cunningham et al., 2020).

Thus, in order to develop employees' self-learning, it is also necessary to make management decisions more efficient and create better opportunities for this learning. As the management of the learning organizations was chosen for the research, the educational institution and its employees which are teachers were chosen as the research organizations by the decision of the authors of this article. The basis of the scientific problem of the research is detailed in the following questions: What self-learning strategies prevail in the learning organization? How can these strategies be encouraged by increasing the effectiveness of the management of the learning organization?

Research object – management activities of the learning organization in order to create opportunities for self-learning of employees - teachers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The concept of effective management

In a world of change, changes are driving the need for effective leadership and effective leadership in organizations. Accordingly, effective leadership can help an organization to grow and change. This gives rise to the concept of manager-leader in implementing, managing, and controlling change in an organization. Leadership will not be effective if it is not based on leadership, which is the manager's ability to mobilize people to successfully achieve the overall goals of the organization, to manage the team properly to achieve team performance (Algahtani, 2014; Mujtaba, 2020). The position of the leader in the learning organization is also changing from control-based to activity-based, independent and responsible management.

Team members must be involved in the management of the organization, as leadership is a persistent pursuit of learning and teaching to share responsibility and continue the work that has been started (Durmishi et al., 2020). After all, the concept of leadership is based on the application of appropriate skills to manage the organization to achieve professional, institutional, and collaborative goals with employees (Rahman, 2021).

General education schools can only do so by applying the principles of effective management in order to change and become learning organizations. After all, education is a key factor in the development of society, which cannot be separated from changes in society and the world. For schools to be effective, they need an enterprising, creative, capable leader to manage change and prepare them for the team, and an active team that wants to improve.

Today, it is impossible to imagine schools without change, and this requires the continuous improvement of the school as an organization. The only way for schools to survive the competition is to become learning organizations in a learning society, which would create the conditions for real learning and practice research and make learning opportunities a key objective of their work (Varshney, 2019).

In modern organizations, effective management makes it easier for them to compete, and managers are forced to periodically re-evaluate the organization's performance and focus more on employee learning (Berhovich, 2020; Banwart, 2020; Merkys et al., 2013). In order to remain leading and in demand, organizations must constantly improve, learn, become qualitatively new, i. e. learning organizations. And one of the features of these organizations is that the organization must not only monitor the current situation but also look to the future in educating employees.

The learning organization is constantly improving by rapidly developing and redefining the skills needed for future success (Gudauskas et al. 2012). The catalyst for the evolution of organizational management is the formation of innovative management ideas, the establishment of forms and methods of re-inventorying business processes in public sector management practice (Raipa, 2014).

Modern management in the modern stage is described as the search for and implementation of new innovative performance management models, focusing on the business processes of public organizations to change the place and role management processes of complex - integrative structures (Skrickienė, 2018).

Managers in a learning organization are perceived as learning leaders, strategists, planners, and personalities (Skrickienė, 2018), who are a learning organization are able not only to continuously learn but also to encourage learning in the organization's employees. The active position of the managers and employees of the learning organization itself, which can be encouraged and supported by appropriate communication and emotional state of managers

and employees, is crucial for more effective public governance (Cunningham, 2020; Berkovich, 2020; Banwart, 2020; Grecco et al., 2021).

2.2. The concept of a learning organization

The concept of a learning organization is broad and ambiguous. Many definitions of a learning organization can be found in the scientific literature, as different disciplines define and analyze this concept. In addition, researchers define a learning organization differently because it is a fairly new concept in both the scientific literature and practice.

However, in most cases, the definition of a learning organization distinguishes between knowledge, which covers all levels, from the generation of knowledge, the transfer of knowledge and other information generated, and the reflection of learning experiences. These are organizations where people are constantly increasing their competence to achieve results, where team aspirations are freely expanding, and where people are constantly learning to see the whole. Furthermore, employee innovation is important for the sustainable competitiveness of an organization (Peyravi, 2021).

Researchers from different countries have studied the topic of the learning organization from various aspects. The first to popularise the term learning organization was Senge (1990), in which he defined it as “an organization that learns itself and at the same time encourages its people to learn. It supports the exchange of information between its employees, thus creating an increasingly knowledgeable workforce.

All this creates a very flexible organization, whose employees have a common vision and are easy to accept new ideas and adapt to change. It is believed that the learning organisations appeared and were started to be established in the end of 20th century and it is related to this period of time because more changes took place, processes had become more flexible, the needs of the population had grown and increased, more competition between organizations had begun to develop, and the economy had begun to recover and grow. In the context of a learning organization, accessible and open information and its system, encouraging staff to be proactive, open opportunities for development, and a spirit of learning within the organization are very important.

According to Ghazali et al. (2015), a learning organization is a place where people learn strongly on their own and collectively to expand their knowledge and skills. Thus, a learning organization is understood as experimental, flexible, able to respond quickly to changes in the

environment and processes and to have an impact on the external environment (Örtenblad, 2018). Just as an organization is open to communication, where learning that takes place on a permanent basis is an essential part of organizational culture (Malik et al., 2017).

The concept of a learning organization is especially relevant for general education schools. In his early work, M. Fullan wrote that the future of the world depends on learning (Quinn et al., 2019). Examining the problems of the school as a learning organization, he (2019) singles out a very competent, constantly learning, demanding feature of the staff - as a distinguishing feature of the school - learning organization; emphasizes the change management skills necessary for teachers. One of those abilities is thought to be interest and cooperation. The latter is emphasized in creating a good environment in the organization. Collaboration is critical to a person's learning.

Fullan (2018) argues that people need each other to learn more, constantly update their existing knowledge, take an interest in innovation, change, and adapt to it. The expression of the school as a learning organization depends on the pedagogue's need to improve, communicate and cooperate, delve into today's issues, be able to accept challenges and learn about himself. In order to motivate the school staff in a targeted way, it is important to find out how to encourage the staff to improve and bring the institution closer to the ideal to be achieved - the learning organization.

And teachers will do it willingly, if they are guided in a purposeful way, they will be supported, the head of the organization will support them, they will provide the necessary information because satisfaction with the organization acts as a factor that builds self-confidence (Dobržinskienė et al., 2021).

Thus, the most important task for the development of the learning process lies within the school head. In addition, a successful promotion strategy can ensure the development of teachers and move closer to the school's ideal of becoming a lifelong learning organization (Leithwood et al., 2019; Deligiannidou et al., 2020; Azorin, 2019; Xie, 2020; Day et al. 2020). Therefore, the task of the organization is to encourage, support its employees, provide the necessary information and training.

Learning is not limited to learning through training or in-service training seminars, employees in a learning organization are constantly learning: from each other, their mistakes, they reach the level of meta-learning when they observe themselves, they can take a critical

look at their knowledge. Eventually, learning creates partnerships in which each employee can participate according to their personal needs.

Thus, a learning organization is understood as an organization in which the generation of knowledge and the transfer of information, the reflection of the experience gained and the reflection on the perspectives of the activity in order to achieve the goals of the organization and adapt to the changing environment take place continuously. In addition, that is influenced by effective management of the organization and leaders with leadership qualities.

2.3. The concept of informal learning

Summarizing the conception of informal learning in the 20th century, it should be noted that informal learning was discussed as a continuous process that benefits the learners themselves and helps to guarantee people's well-being, and as the instrument that “produces” a competent worker and brings more benefits to the field of production and services, but not for the learner himself.

In the scientific literature of the 21st century, the tendency is observed to reveal the concept of informal learning through coherence with the subject by using the categories of purposefulness and consciousness (Alonderienė, 2009). In order to delimit informal learning from formal and non-formal learning, the concept of informal learning is often associated with the category of learning environment.

The concepts of informal learning include the following categories: pedagogical intentions, certification of academic results, planning of the learning process, management of the learning process (Paurienė, 2017).

The key problem in defining the concept of informal learning is the synonymous use of this concept with self-managed learning, incidental learning, situational learning, implicit learning and other forms of learning. The concepts informal learning are corrected and supplemented when attention is drawn to different aspects of this phenomenon. The concept of informal learning is also based on learning through experience (Kirchhöfer, 2004).

Analyzing the processes of informal learning in the environment of professional activity, the transfer of daily self-learning processes from personal to professional environment reveals the link between informal learning processes, experiential and reflexive learning. The varied definitions of informal learning allow for different interpretations, there is no single common understanding of the concept and conception of informal learning.

However, the study and analysis of the concept of informal learning in scientific literature, the generalized look at informal learning from the perspectives of different discourses suggests that learning itself is neither formal, nor non-formal or informal, it can only be characterized by the factors of the environment in which it takes place, according to the pedagogical intention, and according to the degree of intension from the learner's perspective. (Paurienè, 2017).

Informal learning is thought to be the continuum between unconscious incidental and self-governing learning, between implicit and explicit learning. Definitions that focus on the organization of learning and the process of learning itself complement each other rather than compete with each other. In terms of informal learning, the construct is kept in mind, which is revealed and explained by life, while the intention and processuality may occur in different degrees.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research methodology

In the present research, informal learning is understood as unplanned, occasional, latent learning, as well as planned and targeted learning. Informal learning is studied in the context of several theoretical-philosophical approaches. Based on the notion that pedagogues improve their competences by continuous learning throughout their lives, philosophical ideas of pragmatism are referred to, which emphasize the importance of the individual's experience for the educational process.

Learning is viewed not as learning for life, but as life itself (Dewey, 1909/2008). It is also based on the Constructivist Theory, i.e. a pedagogue is considered to be an active learner, who is able to plan, reflect, refine and change his/her activities, taking into account the specific situation and context. Every individual builds his/her personal reality, based on experience, new knowledge and communication with others, i.e. he/she learns and develops him/herself. The constructivist approach to learning emphasizes the design of subjective knowledge of the individual based on interpretation, in interaction with the environment (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 1996).

The constructivist approach to learning argues that it is a self-governing, constructive, biographically influenced, cognitive, and emotional activity (Siebert, 2013); a person learns in interaction with the environment by constructing his/her own knowledge (Kelly, 1963); the

roots of knowledge are sociocultural, and learning is inseparable from the context (Vygotsky, 1978).

The research is based on the model of qualitative research design (Blaikie, 2010), based on social constructivism and pragmatic knowledge positions (Creswell, 2007). The biographical-abduction (Grounded Theory) research strategy has been selected as the research aim.

Biographical research is recommended for those research fields that are not much investigated and not much conceptualized (Fuchs-Heinritz, 2009), in order to see the relationship between life course and learning processes: “A biography is like a foil, which focuses on human daily actions and solutions” (Lamnek, 2010, p. 629).

Both, the concept of informal learning and the biographical research are based on a broad concept of learning that links learning with the life experiences of the individual and emphasizes learning positioning in these experiences (Geißler & Orthey, 2002; Felden, 2004).

Therefore, biographical narrative interview has been selected as the method for collecting the research data. The systematic process of data collection, analysis and results are based on the theory of abduction design research logic by Peirce (1992) and the grounded theory methodology by Strauss and Corbin (1996).

The theoretical part of the research was prepared using the methods of analysis and generalization of scientific sources. The biographical narrative interview, which is based on spontaneous narration of the experienced events, was chosen as the method for empirical research data collection (Rosenthal, 2011).

According to Alheit and Dausien (1996), learning and competence development are essentially seen as narratively reproduced biographical experience.

The process of data collection, analysis and results are grounded on the theory-based methodology according to Strauss and Corbin (1996) and the theory of abductive research logic according to Peirce (1992), which seek to describe and understand social life by “gluing” the fragments of the social meaning of life presented by the participants of the study into a coherent description of the phenomenon of social life (Blaikie, 2010).

In solving the problem of compatibility between biographical research and the Grounded Theory (Rosenthal, 2011; Alheit & Dausien, 1996), an additional data analysis phase was used. Before the open coding of the Grounded Theory, in order to maintain a

comprehensive biographical narrative form, the methodology – “shaping interpretation” developed by Bohnsack (2014) was used.

The quality of the research is ensured by:

- a) describing the indications of the research process (in what perspective, the paradigm-based research, methodology, sample selection, and why), research process, data analysis, presentation of results, solutions and problems (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014);
- b) the inclusion of subjects of the research (the results of the research, the conclusions are presented to the subjects asking them to assess their credibility, validity) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985);
- c) incorporating the author's interview in the research data (Strauss & Corbin, 1996);
- d) consulting with colleagues (personal consultations, methodological seminars for doctoral students, presentation of preliminary results at conferences).

3.2. Collected empirical data

The database of the research consists of 14 biographical narrative interviews, which were collected and analyzed during the period of 2016-2017. The research population are the pedagogues who are engaged or used to be engaged in professional activities, with no less than 7 years of pedagogical work experience, irrespective of the educational institution.

Nevertheless, that the tradition of naming higher education teachers in the tradition of andragogy is still developing in Lithuania, the concept of andragogy professional is not yet widely accepted, it is not mentioned either in the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (2017) or in the most important activity documents (Statute, Code of Ethics, Strategic Action Plans) in the institutions of higher education (such as Klaipeda University, Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University).

The concept of a pedagogue in its broad sense, i. e. bringing together educators, teachers and university lecturers was chosen to use. This choice was also due to the fact that pedagogues' professional pedagogical activities in their life stories intertwine in different educational institutions, and therefore it would be difficult to determine exactly whether he/she is a pedagogue (for example, a school teacher) or an andragogue (for example, a lecturer of the institution of higher education).

The survey sample (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2007), targets at obtaining meaningful information, based on the fundamental selection criteria: pedagogical work experience. The chosen criterion was based on the results of the Huberman's (1991) research, where the pedagogue's professional competence is linked with the length of pedagogical work. He argued that after 7 years of pedagogical work pedagogues feel stable and confident in their profession, a desire to experiment and to re-evaluate themselves emerges.

In the theoretical selection it was sought to find informants – pedagogues with different experiences at the level of education, with different work experience in educational institutions and general work experience. The provision of the Grounded Theory is to gather a wider range and more extensive data from the field of study (Strauss & Corbin, 1996).

According to Lamnek (2010), the number of participants in the study sample is considered appropriate, when describing the phenomenon, it can be argued that no additional data will provide new knowledge to the image of the investigated phenomenon (saturation of data).

Article's purpose – to discuss effective management solutions that help to improve the self-learning of employees - teachers.

To achieve this, the following tasks are set:

- a) discuss the concepts of effective management and learning organization, and the theoretical aspects of self-directed learning;
- b) to reveal the self-learning strategies of the learning organization - the school.

The theoretical part of the research was prepared using the methods of analysis and generalization of scientific sources. The biographical narrative interview, which is based on spontaneous narration of the experienced events, was chosen as the method for empirical research data collection. The process of data collection, analysis and results are grounded on the theory-based methodology according to Strauss and Corbin (1996) and the theory of abductive research logic according to Peirce (1992).

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The conducted interview analysis allowed to single out the categories which reveal the strategies of self-learning in the learning organization, in this case, in an educational institution. The key category is the practical work. The categories are distinguished into the following:

- a) Observation;
- b) Communication and cooperation;
- c) Reflection;
- d) Reading.

In this section, each category is discussed separately with provided interview citations.

Practical work. Practical work ensures direct contact with the profession and the requirements placed on it. The data of the research material clearly illustrate that practical work in pedagogical activities can be considered as the main strategy of the self-learning process. In their professional activities, educators have to constantly react to emerging innovations, be able to reorient, adapt to the needs of students and society.

One of the biggest challenges is the need to reorientate and lead to lifelong learning. Furthermore, the reorientation takes place when a new space of activity is encountered, e. i. during the change of jobs or occupation from a high school to gymnasium or vice versa also changing their teaching or training courses, or starting administrative work, facing much more motivated students than before: "It was a completely different job once again, and it was necessary to start from scratch.. as if to work with students rather than postgraduates." (Interview No. 14, 213-214); "And I worked at the school for eight years. Still preserving my belief that I won't work with children. I finishing health psychology out of school, so I had to learn a lot about how to work with children by myself" (interview No. 5, 182-185); "(...) I'm glad that just the kids we work with .. are a little different contingent .. and can work with them differently, and that work goes a little differently. (...) children are more motivated because I have something to compare them with. I worked for half a year in a school where ... I had to think about how to keep the children in class for 45 minutes, but not think about what I could give them more, what to teach more, and in this case, you have to think about how to make it more interesting and fruitful." (Interview No. 2, 145-152).

Of course, the knowledge of modern technologies that is useful in everyday life also requires new competencies, and this often becomes a real challenge for employees with many years of professional experience: "And for us, teachers, many new innovations appeared as well, like computers and we had to enlarger our knowledge" (Interview No. 14, 171-172); "(...) we had to do an assignment. .. I would sit .. I recall sitting in a library, writing a text. There were computers in the library, the first ones in our school .. I'm writing and writing .. it does

not seem to be approaching an end. .. I think, Lord, when will I have those twenty pages...” (Interview No. 8, 355-358).

Informants talk about their learning, realizing that by teaching others, they are learning themselves. Experiences of teaching, preparation of methodological material, preparation for seminars can be considered as active self-learning strategies in this case, leading to the development of personal, didactic, subject competencies: “Now I can show and teach others .. There were older colleagues, now most have retired, they really have a hard time with the new technologies. It becomes clear when you show by teaching someone else. And a child, when you are explaining him how it works, with this model in about a year it will seem like you are able to explain the subject very simply.” (Interview No. 6, 238-242); “(...) I remember how I wrote, I prepared textbooks ... Nobody taught how to layout, how to prepare, how to prepare tasks. (...) And what form of task to do? I relied on my experience from an internship at the Goethe-Institut in Germany, where I really enjoyed the textbook format from which we worked.” (Interview No. 12, 121-126).

Learning motivation, cognitive needs, assimilated self-learning strategies, emotions and social environment all together determine, as Riegel (2014) observes, whether learning will take place or not. These factors form the “individual learning structure” of each individual (Riegel, 2014).

Of course, this is also related to self-directed learning, as the professional environment can be seen as an incentive for self-directed learning processes to be chosen for these learning strategies. Self-learning ability is related both to cognitive conditions and to biographical socialization and experiential processes that affect the learner. In the following, we will discuss the other categories that emerged in the study as self-learning strategies.

Observation. Educators constantly monitor what is happening in their environment of their professional activities. Observational learning is based on the theory of cognitive learning, which is based on mental information processing. The ability to learn by observation is considered useful and effective, as it allows the adaptation of integrated action models without the need to learn from one’s own trials or errors. There are numerous moments in the interview that illustrate that one of the strategies for self-directed learning is to monitor the professional and social behaviour of colleagues as well as the students themselves: “(...) When we go to any seminar at the Goethe-Institut, we actually get that knowledge, both methodological and various methods, that we can use in lessons with children. We can really see how others work.”

(Interview No. 2, 461-463); "(...) and then, of course, you always learn from the people around you, from those colleagues ... there were many of them ..." (interview No. 7, 175-176); "(...) watching ... especially now that those technological possibilities are emerging. Watching other .. famous lecturers, let's say a website where you see that it gets millions of views per day, watching as that person, despite the fact that maybe not the topic I'm teaching, but how that person speaks, the way he teaches, what is his approach, where and how does he puts the emphasis, what is the intonation of the voice. .. the same .. methodology how to do it. What works, when do people react, when do they not. (...) observation when you get into lectures (...), it is the observation of the lecturer himself" (interview No. 5, 320-327); "(...) From children you can learn youth (laughter). If you accept it, when you live surrounded by young people you feel as if perhaps you are not getting old that quick, .. Because .. My children probably teach me, when you hear that young voice and realise that the world did not stop at the limit of your youth ... And there was, and there was ... Whoever was, no longer is, you want it ... Life goes on and goes so fast" (interview No. 7, 287-290).

Through observation - a self-learning strategy, as the quotes in the interview illustrate, methodological competence is developed by observing "how to do it" through "how others do it", attitudes important for personal competence are acquired - "the world has not stopped at the edge of your youth".

Communication and cooperation. An important aspect of teachers' activities is the collective work style based on the principles of cooperation. Groups of community members solve specific problems, collaborate with each other, learn from each other, and can increase the effectiveness of the entire organization: "(...) we work in a team, I am very helped by other teachers." (...) "We have a team at school, .. we work in collaboration of specialists - social pedagogue, psychologist, spec. pedagogue - speech therapist and a nurse. So, we are collaborating. I mostly collaborate with a psychologist and a nurse. Now with a drug prevention program, we're here together with a nurse. You do this, and I will do this. We work with the psychologist to counsel the students, to solve those other problems." (...) "a lot of my students who have come back work here, and then all the time I keep mentioning that I work in a team. If anyone asks me for something, I help as much as I can. But bear in mind, none of the teachers told me "no, I'm not going to do this" because a social educator alone isn't going to do anything. Student support professionals need to work together, there needs to be a team. If everyone is by themselves .. pff .. nada." (Interviews No. 13, 76, 87-92, 272-276)

It is obvious that a lot is learned in the professional activity from the work team, which unites various people - long-term employees and newcomers, more creative and less creative, etc. In teams you can meet educators and their former students who are embarking on this professional path. The members of the work team with their professional experience and their behavioural patterns determine the development of professional competence of the new members, i. e. illustrates the required skills, knowledge and values with their actions, and conveys through communication: “What especially influences the growth of professional competence? .. In my understanding, these are just people you meet. Both for the professional competence of the teacher and equally for the students.” (Interview No. 10, 516-518).

The informants emphasize the experience of many years of work as an aspect that impresses them, inspires sympathy and respect. Learning by communicating and collaborating with older colleagues clearly contributes to the methodological, cognitive competences of a child as an integral part of professional competence by becoming a strategic part of self-directed learning: “And a lot of that psychological knowledge is needed. This is what it is like to be here, to talk to your first graders here, to talk to your second graders ... Nothing similar, at this age of the children the competence of the older colleagues becomes very important because at first children are trying you out...” (Interview No. 3, 55-58)

Reflection. Experiential learning, learning from practical work, is a way of learning when learning by reflecting on one's own experiences. According to Kirchhöfer (2004), it is learning that is “directly related to changing activities, to the reflection of condition-activity-outcome relationships, and to the integration of previous experiences” (see *ibid.*, p. 86), i. e. learners engage in the activity, critically analyse it with reflection, and thus gain useful insights. Analysing the aspects of continuous professional development of educational institution employees, researchers name professional development strategies: reflection - it translates professional experience into learning, learning into professional and personal development, and the latter into better performance of professional activity (Teresevičienė et al., 2004); generation of new knowledge, research by learning and reflecting on one's own experience, changing it (Kvedaraitė, 2009).

The informants in the interview reveal that the reflection changes the previous attitudes, a new understanding of professional activities, the meaning of motivation, the importance of the authenticity of the employee's expression comes to light: “That kind of work with a child was a challenge for myself because after my experiences I believe that you can never have that

conviction. Well, .. I saw that child, .. they can't control him, and suddenly I have it myself, .. aaah .. and how will I do it? But anyhow .. I tell myself that I will never have this conviction again.“ (Interview No. 11, 143-146); “Really, the methodology doesn't matter, it doesn't matter if I explain it in that way or other way. Whether I turn on the slides, the computer, I put on a video, or something else ... If there is no relationship with the learner, the technology can be a bit ... And we miss this thing all the time.” (Interview No. 10, 476-479).

Learning from experience can also be identified as learning by reflecting on personal mistakes, where mistakes determine the course and experience of learning. Informants mention both personal mistakes and mistakes made by others. Significant experiences they have learned are often associated with wrong decisions, failed stories, or unexpected problems. Only acknowledged, analysed mistakes help an individual to focus on learning, personal development, and at the same time the development of a teacher's professional competence: “(...) I had someone to learn from how I shouldn't. .. It has been in my life for real, I don't want to get in depth about it, but there were actually so many cases like that .. things I wouldn't want to do, and I try not to do. Some things may have been successful, some not, .. but I saw what you shouldn't do and what shouldn't happen.” (interview No. 7, 450-453).

Reading. Today, reading can be described as the ability to understand and use those forms of written language that are necessary and valuable for an individual to live in society. In this conception, the ability to read is expanded much more broadly than in the description of reading prevailing in the twentieth century, when reading meant the ability to read and understand a written text. “Reading is a meaning-building and problem-solving activity that is more productive and flexible, the more often it is applied.” (Charlton, 2007, p. 35), and “the reader not only reproduces the words written on the page, but also constructs meaning from the text. The meaning is what is actively created, not what is passively obtained”. Buehl summarizes in recent research in reading psychology (2004, p. 11). Informants say that their professional competence is good because they are "constantly learning", i. e. is constantly actively developing knowledge using reading as a self-learning strategy: “(...) I am really happy and I can say that my subject knowledge is very good .. and not only because I once lived somewhere, but because .. I am constantly learning. I read and study all the time, and ... I'm looking for information, I see ... everything is in English.” (Interview No. 10, 1050-1053); “Thus, as if I had taken over the methodological competence from my teacher, the subject matter was practiced by constant reading and travelling.” (Interview No. 12, 101-102); (...) “I

read a lot, and to this day I read a lot of literature, theory, pedagogical theory, all these different things, because it gives me not the knowledge, the knowledge is already there, but .. you need such reassurance again and again that what you are doing, you are not doing just because, .. you are doing it because you need to do it ” (Interview No. 10, 622-625).

Self-learning strategies such as practical work, observation, communication and cooperation, reflection, reading - are considered to be individual ways of learning of the learning organization, in this case, educational institutions, the manifestation of which is influenced by biographical socialization and experiential processes. New knowledge and understanding acquired during the processes of self-directed learning can become a precondition for further development of the employee, the desire to improve not only through self-directed but also through formal learning.

5. DISCUSSION

The need to update the knowledge of the organization's managers and staff is also influenced by the speed of change in the external environment and globalization. As a result, university diplomas are only becoming a reminder of the past. Self-directed learning in the workplace, as shown by the central category of the research - Practical work - allows to reliably update and consolidate professional skills. All this leads to the need for modern managers to create learning organizations in which the skills and knowledge of employees are constantly updated.

An analysis of the scientific literature on the concept of a learning organization (Skrickienė et al., 2018) showed that it is an organization that learns in the individual, group, team, organizational, and community levels. Strategies for the self-directed learning process are also found at these levels. The learning organization learns on its own and at the same time encourages its employees to learn. It is the goal of effective management to support the exchange of the latest and most relevant information between employees, to create a flexible organization whose employees have a common vision of work. A learning organization should focus on managerial innovation, easily embrace new ideas, and adapt to change that helps the organization become innovative and competitive.

The task of effective management of a learning organization is to help employees adapt to today's constant changes by providing a suitable learning environment within the organization, enabling their employees to be able to analyze both their past experiences and to

be future-oriented; to develop their competencies, acquire new skills, create new knowledge and share it with others. The learning environment within the organization is a very important factor in the development of self-learning strategies for employees.

After all, it is in this environment that “unconsciously” learning is organized or takes place, relationships between employees are created, leading to communication and cooperation, learning by observing how others perform certain tasks, and other self-learning strategies such as reflection or reading can be chosen.

Management and culture are inextricably linked. In particular, a manager’s talent is manifested in his or her ability to understand the emerging culture in the organization or simply to transform an existing culture into a culture of learning and to support it in a targeted manner. In that sense, culture and leadership are like two sides of the same coin. The internal environment of the organization reflects the cultural aspect, in this case we could talk about the integration of recreational-self-learning areas into the work environment. Such zones are a space where employees can communicate in an informal environment, unite specialists from different fields into one team, get to know each other. The area of space is not very important, but if we have in mind a self-learning strategy such as reflection, it is also desirable to create quieter, more enclosed spaces. Consequently, we should talk about the installation of a passive and active recreation area. When developing a strategy for reading as self-directed learning, it would be expedient to establish a reading area of relevant professional literature, constantly supplementing it with new publications.

All possible decisions are influenced by the effective management of the learning institution, the relevant decisions of the managers are made when communicating with the employees of the organization.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ever-changing world and its environment are forcing change in many organizations, including schools. They aim to become learning organizations. Effective management and a proper understanding of the goals of the learning organization are essential for this. And this must be relevant to both the leaders of the learning organizations and their employees. Only with effective management and an appropriate leader can the competitiveness and development of a learning organization be successful.

In learning organizations, employees need to constantly improve, change in response to change, accept new challenges, so learning is very important to them. One form of learning is self-directed learning.

The research revealed self-learning strategies - practical work, observation, communication and cooperation, reflection, reading, which are considered as individual ways of learning the learning organization (school). Given the emergence of self-learning strategies, the integration of recreational-self-learning areas (passive and active) into the work environment can be considered. They could be used by everyone, where employees could communicate in an informal environment, get to know each other better and share their experiences; separate, closed, where employees can devote their time to reflection; read professional literature.

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